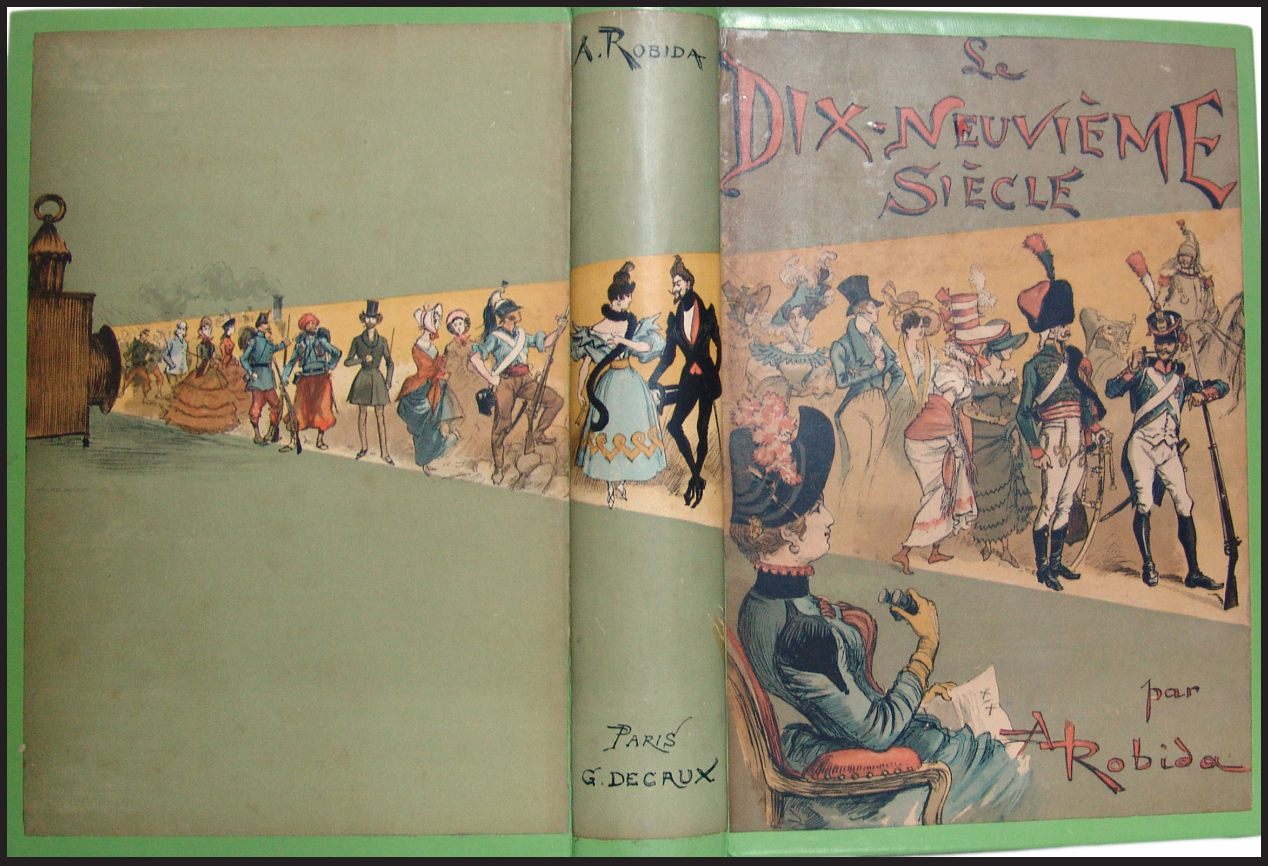
ISSN 1059-1249

The Magic Lantern Gazette

A Journal of Research

Volume 28, Number 1 Spring 2016



The Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada

www.magiclanternsociety.org

A Slightly New Look for the *Gazette*

In the ten years I have been editing *The Magic Lantern Gazette*, I have found it increasingly difficult to read small print, including the *New York Times*. On the reasonable assumption that nobody else in the society is getting any younger, I did some research online on ways to maximize the visibility of printed text for older eyes, without making it look like a large-print edition of *Reader's Digest*, or take up too many pages per issue. The National Institute of Aging has a useful web page on this topic.

The most readable type fonts for printed text are fonts with serifs, the little bends at the bottom of letters like "t," which lead the eye toward the next letter in a word. **Times New Roman**, a popular computer font for printed text, is such a font. So is **Georgia**, which has a similar design, but some additional advantages. Type font size is not equivalent to the linear dimensions of the font—a 10-point of one style is not always the same size as a 10-point font of another style.

Previously the *Gazette* text has been set in 10-point Times New Roman, with 8-point type used for less frequently read sections, such as endnotes (this sentence is in 10-point Times New Roman).

This issue is set in 10-point Georgia (as is this sentence). As you can see, for the same font size, Georgia letters are slightly bigger than those in Times New Roman. They also are ever so slightly thicker, which provides more contrast with the page, thereby improving visibility. Yet the letters are not so large as to be unattractive or make the *Gazette* look like a children's book. It does use a little more space, so there are slightly fewer words per page, and any given article may be a bit longer. The front cover remains in Times New Roman, since the letters are in larger fonts anyway, and certain elements, such as numbers, are more attractive in this font.

Other features of a printed page that makes text easier to read for aging eyes include the use of non-glossy paper, which reduces glare; arranging text in small blocks with white space in between; and lack of text wrapping around illustrations, although there may be esthetic reasons to use this design. These are already features of the *Gazette's* design.

I would be interested in hearing from members about the new look. Also, if members still have trouble reading the *Gazette*, you can always email me and I will be happy to send a PDF copy free of charge, which you can blow up to any size on a computer screen. Of course, once the 2016 issues are finished and posted to the San Diego State University Library webpage, they will be in computer readable PDF format anyway.

As a side note, many scholarly academic journals seem to be going in the opposite direction. As the number of journal articles published has increased, text has become smaller, as shown for several journals I have received for more than 30 years. One animal behavior journal now has a table of contents with letters literally half the height of those in the first issue of the journal, making it impossible to read without a magnifying glass. Many journals also are printed on glossy paper, which looks more "professional," but makes text harder to read. They also tend to feature long, uninterrupted blocks of text, which, coupled with small type fonts, makes text particularly hard to read.

The feature article in this issue is a very interesting look at the writings and illustrations of a pioneering French science fiction writer, Albert Robida, who imagined life in the 20th century, often with adapted 19th century technology. His work was full of all sorts of vehicles and flying machines yet to be invented. A major influence on his work was the magic lantern, especially with reference to his futuristic "telephonoscope." This imaginary device could transmit moving pictures and sound over long distances, and allow two-way instant communication. Many instruments can do this today, although their form is not exactly as Robida imagined them.

The author is a French doctoral student, and her article is only one of several I now have in hand or promised, most from young European researchers. That means I have an uncharacteristic backlog of material, but I am always looking for new articles, especially from North American scholars.

Kentwood D. Wells, Editor
451 Middle Turnpike
Storrs, CT 06268
kentwood.wells@uconn.edu

Albert Robida's Visions of Future Time: The Magic Lantern Turned into a Magic Mirror

Fleur Hopkins
Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne
ED 441 Histoire de l'Art / EA 4100 HiCSA
hopkins.fleur@gmail.com

Would you like to see the whole next century? Gosh darn it! The recipe is easy, flip through the pages of a volume and you will be a hundred years older.

Advertisement for *The Twentieth Century*, *La Caricature*, December 2, 1882, number 153, p. 386.

Albert Robida (1848-1926) (Fig. 1), who is considered the inventor of steampunk, has long been overshadowed by Jules Verne. Robida was a French reporter, writer, and illustrator, who produced a series of books in which he imagined how the world would be in the 1950s.[1] Shaped by his experience as a caricaturist for the newspaper *La Caricature*, which he served as chief editor until 1892, he delivered an amusing but pessimistic tale that recounted the ambitions and the daily lives of the Ponto and Lorris families. What makes his work so unique is that he was both the author and the illustrator of this prospective world. Like Balzac, "more of an historian, than a novelist," Robida was interested in the men of his time, and he depicted their way of life in an hypothetical technological future. Often called a "prophet," "visionary," or "clairvoyant," those that comment on his work insist on his ability to *see* what is yet to come. Philippe Willems, for instance, argues that Robida's way of writing is stereoscopic, that is to say the future is seen in three dimensions, using a stereoscope. In this article, I will show that another optical device had an even more significant influence: the magic lantern. This magic box is indeed a recurrent metaphor in both his literature and illustrations, and it even inspired an invention in the future: the telephonoscope.

Albert Robida (1848-1926).

http://www.robida.info/

"Paris in a Magic Lantern": Robida and Panoramic Literature

"What makes Paris so profoundly amusing, is that we see everything like in a huge magic lantern," stated Honoré de Balzac in his pages dedicated to the Press.[2] The kaleidoscope, the panorama, and the magic lantern especially, are recurrent optical devices used to depict the Parisian life of the nineteenth century. Guillaume Gavarni's print, *Le Diable à Paris* [*The Devil in Paris*] (1845), for instance, shows the Devil, holding a

What is Steampunk?

Steampunk literature is a subgenre of science-fiction that relies on technologies and aesthetics taken from the 19th century, mixed with innovations and imaginary inventions. The term first appeared long after Albert Robida, in 1987, in *Locus* magazine, when the science-fiction author K.W. Jeter was looking for a funny neologism that would enlighten his own "victorian fantaisies." "Steampunk," a response to "cyberpunk," takes place in the Victorian Era, a century defined by steam power and the Industrial Revolution. Steampunk, for the journalist Douglas Fetherling, imagines how the past would have been different if the future had come earlier. Steampunk stories, then, are not so much interested in going into the future, but instead bringing the future into a nineteenth century setting. "Retro-futurism" is another expression used to describe stories that blend together past tense with futuristic improvements. If steampunk literature is hard to define, it is sometimes confused with uchronia or alternate history.

Robida, in his scientific romances taking place in the 1950s, uses the way of life of the men of his time, but improves their daily lives by imaginary means of air transportations (the *aéronef*, houses in the sky…), new cultural habits (using the telephonoscope, food delivered through tubes, worldwide news feeds, photographic and animated paintings…), and the generalization of the Fée Electricité ("Fairy Electricity," what the French would call electrical power). His illustrations are a mixture of cogs, tubes, electric lines, and flying objects. We find both innovations of inventions of the nineteenth century and new discoveries. Robida, just as Jules Verne and H.G. Wells, is all the more an interesting representative of proto-steampunk in that he witnessed the nineteenth century itself and aimed to keep its contemporary settings for the 1950s, only adding innovations that draw a dark future filled with pollution and miasmatic wars.

Steampunk's rich universe still influences popular culture today: fashion, movies (*Wild Wild West*—Barry Sonnenfeld, 1999; *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*—Stephen Norrington, 2003; *Sherlock Holmes*—Guy Ritchie, 2009), and video-games (*Dishonored*—2012; *Bioshock*—2013) all find in this subculture a medium of the imagination.

magic lantern in one hand and an eyeglass close to his face, exploring the map of Paris (Fig. 2).[3] The magic lantern is nothing else than the logo of the newspaper *La Caricature* in which Robida illustrated his contemporaries' habits with vitriol (Fig 3). Soldiers, dancers, the bourgeoisie, and all the typical individuals usually mocked in the newspaper, can be found on the slides next to the lantern, scribbled in Robida's evocative style. Undoubtedly, he drew a line between the entertainment shows of the lantern and his amusing cartoons in the newspaper. The allegory of *La Caricature*, often shown using optical instruments, is holding a telescope as well as a fountain-pen on the frontispiece (Fig. 4). Around her, a multitude of small characters are emerging from different spheres: love affairs, private life, politics, etc. The illustration seems to imply that she adjusts the lens on the characters to

Fig 2. Guillaume Gavarni, "Le Diable à Paris," bookstore poster, 1845.

Les Arts Décoratifs

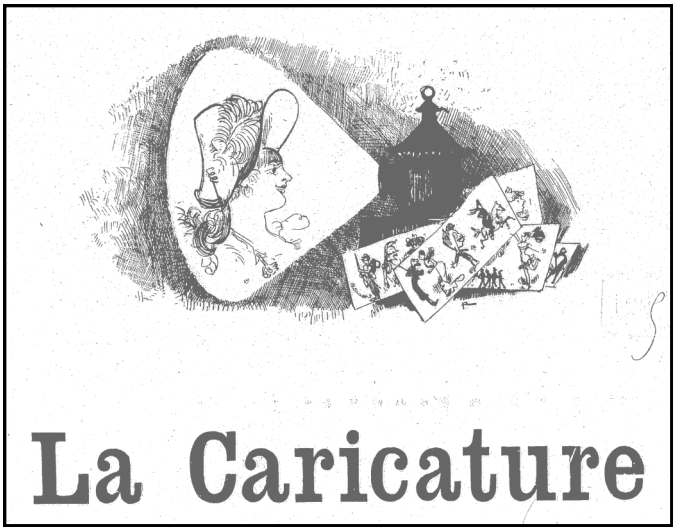


Fig 3. Albert Robida, inside page, *La Caricature*, 1881.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

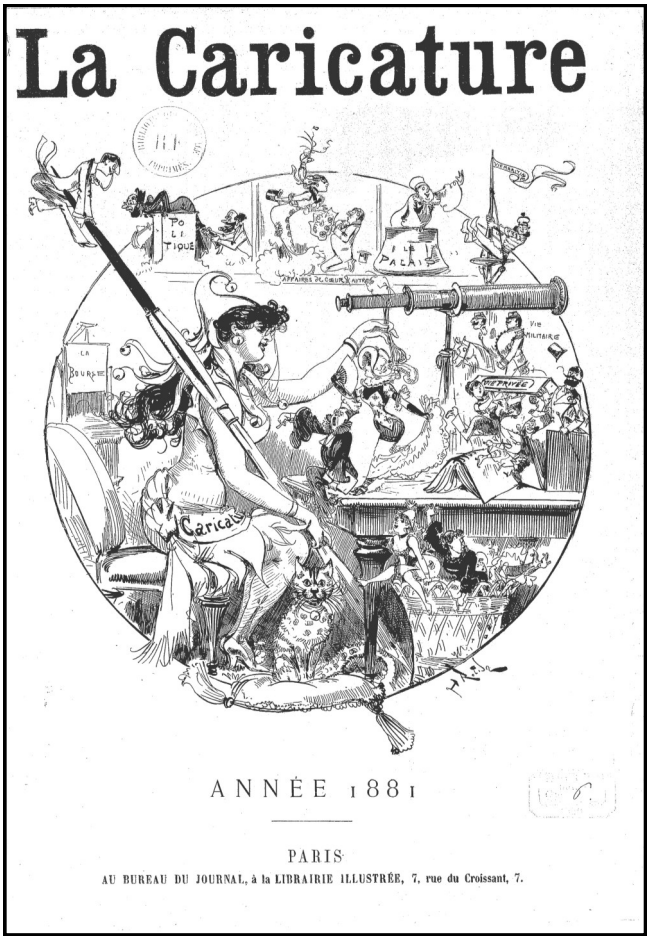


Fig 4. Albert Robida, inside page, *La Caricature*, 1881.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

bring out vivid details about them, and, above all, to bring them to life. The telescope and the magic lantern are two major metaphors of Robida's ways of looking at his peers, depending on whether he was focusing on the details he was about to caricature, or seeking to offer a diversity of characters to his readers. The Renaissance motto *varietas* (diversity) and *copia* (abundance) could very well apply to both of these optical devices.

The notion of "panoramic literature," a genre that flourished under the July Monarchy in France (1830 -1848), is associated with Robida's work. Walter Benjamin tied dioramas and panoramas to the tradition of *Physiologies* [pocket-sized books that combined descriptions of Parisian life with street scenes, portraits, and caricatures, a form that was popular in early 19th century Paris].[4] Just as a panorama shows precise details in the foreground and a more vague landscape in the background, Robida's stories tend to focus on the habits and the ways of life of typical characters, placing them in a futuristic atmosphere, suggested by his illustrations more than by the text itself. Robida was interested in the omni-directional but fictitious glance of the panorama from a captive balloon (Fig. 5) and the panoptic surveillance in *La Mascarade parisienne* (1880), as he imagined an insurance company specialized in infidelities (Fig. 6). In Fig. 5, carried away by their eagerness to see the view below, characters are stretching over the edge of the balloon basket, losing their top hats in the process. The balloon is, however, *captive* and couldn't possibly fly in the sky. Yet again, the painted panorama is a fake view of Paris: it is one of Robida's cartoons showing the inside of various buildings: l'Opéra, l'Hippodrome, L'Hôtel des Ventes, but without their exterior walls. The motif recalls several tales in which the Devil erases the walls—Alain-René Lesage's *Diable boiteux* (1739), for example—stories that often use a magical spyglass.

Fig 5. Albert Robida, "Grand panorama de la bonne ville de Paris, peint à l'huile fine," *La Caricature*, n°80, 8 July 1881, detail of the folding plate attached to the issue.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Fig 6. Albert Robida, *La Grande Mascarade Parisienne*, Paris, A La Librairie Illustrée, illustration, 1880, p. 105.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Nonetheless, it is the magic lantern that holds his attention on the covers of his novels. On the cover of the *Le Dix-neuvième siècle* [*The Nineteenth Century*] (Fig. 7), a woman, comfortably sitting in a theatre seat, is holding a pair of binoculars[5] and seems to be waiting for the show to start.[6] A diverse crowd is depicted in the beam of light projected by a magic lantern drawn on the back cover. Yet again, the emphasis is on the variety of individuals, and the binoculars are here to help focus attention on each character. The magic lantern also refers to a world of phantasmagoria. At that time, the magic lantern made ghostly figures and magical creatures visible, and it surely exalted the suggestive power of Robida's book.

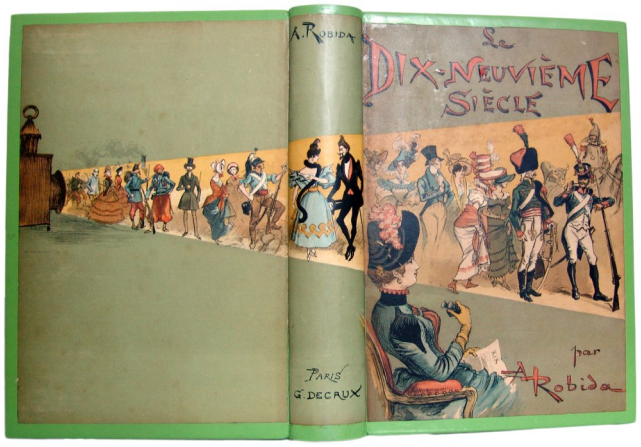


Fig 7. Albert Robida, *Le Dix-neuvième Siècle*, book cover, Paris, G. Decaux, 1888.

Author's collection.

Comparing *Physiologies* to the magic lantern's abilities is not new: Jules Janin, in *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes* [*The French painted by themselves*] (1840-1842), had already compared his book to a " magic lantern" waiting to be lit. See also Catherine Nesci's interesting essay about *flânerie* [the act of strolling through the streets of Paris by an idler, a man of leisure, or an urban explorer; a term introduced into literature by Walter Benjamin]. When commenting on Janin's work, she notes the importance of portraits taken on the spot: the Parisians are walkers, *flâneurs* [strollers], and so on, which are represented in motion.[7] Hence, it is not surprising that Robida staged his characters marching in the ray of a magic lantern, an apparatus caught between pretenses and hallucinations.

Characters of the future, riding a fish-shaped aerostat, are brightly lit by the headlamp of another flying object on the cover of the *Le Vingtième Siècle* [*The Twentieth Century*] (Fig. 8). A closer look at the spotlight reveals that the projector looks like a magic lantern as well, recognizable by its triangular chimney and powerful ray of light. Not only does it strongly confirm the *Vingtième Siècle*'s ambitions to portray how society and all its representatives will be like over the next century, but it also suggests the use of optical instruments is the method used by Robida to jump into future time, to *project* himself into what is yet to come. Robida's mind could then work like a projection that enters another century, as if light let him become a time traveller. In *Tono-Bungay* (1909), H. G. Wells also used the magic lantern as a metaphor to highlight the prophets's work,[8] and in *The Time Machine* (1895), the disappearance of the Traveller has much to do with dissolving views[9].

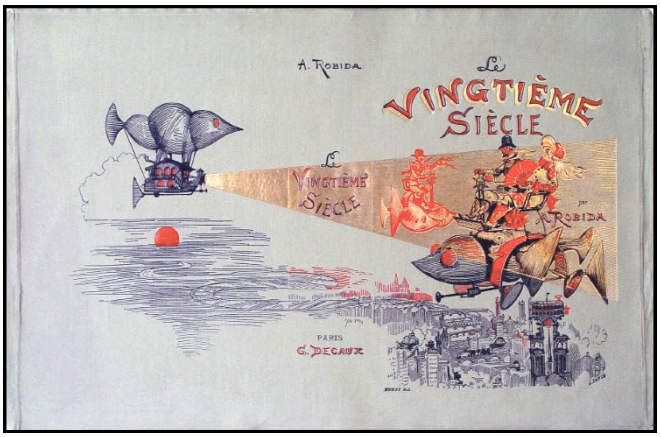


Fig 8. Albert Robida, *Le Vingtième Siècle*, Paris, G. Decaux, front and back book covers, engraved by Auguste Souze, 1883. Reproduced in Sandrine Doré's thesis.

The first page of the book relies on a subtle play between the hidden and the revealed (Fig. 9). A masked woman pulls aside a curtain to unveil a fantastic vision of the next century. If Sandrine Doré links this illustration to a library poster for Honoré de Balzac's *La Comédie Humaine*,[10] I could not help but notice an interesting analogy with a 1887 poster for optical wonders (Fig. 10). In both illustrations, the curtain being lifted means something marvelous is offered to the spectator's eyes.

LE

VINGTIÈME

SIÈCLE

PREMIÈRE PARTIE

I

Trois lycéennes.
De quelques noms de baptême nouveaux.
En omnibus à 250 mètres au-dessus de la Seine.

Le mois de septembre 1952 touchait à sa fin. L'été avait été magnifique ; le soleil, calmant ses ardeurs de messidor, dégageait maintenant ces tièdes et caressantes effluves des belles journées d'automne aux splendeurs dorées.

L'aéronef omnibus B, qui fait le service de la gare centrale des Tubes — boulevard Montmartre — au très aristocratique faubourg Saint-Germain-en-Laye, suivait, à l'altitude réglementaire de deux cent cinquante mètres, la ligne ondulèuse des boulevards prolongés.

Fig 9. Albert Robida, *Le Vingtième Siècle*, Paris, G. Decaux, 1883, first page.
Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Fig 10. Alfred Choubrac, "Les mondes invisibles," engraving, 1887.
Bibliothèque Nationale de France

The most interesting part of this introductory page, however, stands on the capital letter itself. A man, struck with wonder, has just seen in his telescope not the stars, but the anachronistic date of "*septembre 1952*," written in printed scripts. Telescopes and binoculars both make objects appear closer to the viewer. Robida seems to offer an exciting meta-textual proposition based on the use of optical devices: a telescope can be pointing towards the written text; binoculars can be gazing directly at the lector; optical devices can be focusing on a fake representation of a city as if it were a real one; the magic lantern can project images of the past and of the future. The magic lantern, however, is clearly a transportation mode and shifts the writer's body into the futuristic dimension. Many have thought about optical instruments as metaphors for the mind[11]. The magic lantern questions Robida's relationship with the illustrations of his books. The text, often arid, does not give out much detail; it is the drawings, *projections* of his imagination, which give shape to the future.

The Stereoscope vs. the Magic Lantern: Glimpses and Projection in Future Time

Albert Robida's characters are eager to see, and they often have optic accessories with them. In the Louvre Museum of the future, visitors do not walk around the gallerie; they are all sitting in a train that follows a predetermined circuit and recites a few anecdotes when passing in front of a painting (Fig. 11). Binoculars, eyeglasses, spectacles and photo cameras, held at arm's length, are all pointing towards the artworks, as if the visitor needed these intercessors to appreciate his stroll. Robida's prospective novel needs to be understood in terms of vision.

Fig 11. Albert Robida, "Le Tramway au musée du Louvre" [The tramway at the Museum of the Louvre], *Le Vingtième Siècle*, Paris, G. Decaux, 1883, plate facing p. 48.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Philippe Willems devotes an article to the "father of the illustrated science-fiction" and his relationship to the stereoscope, an optical apparatus that gives the illusion of depth and dimension by looking at two photographs taken at a slightly different angle.[12]

The characteristics that set Robida apart from Verne and other scientific novelists are perhaps best illustrated by an analogy with an apparatus contemporary to him, the stereoscope. I am proposing an analogy between Robida's snapshots of a potential future and the stereophotographic process because of this element of extradimensionality. The added depth and substance produced in both this optical process and its literary counterpart created very similar effects. In Robida's case, this illusion of depth and substance is accomplished by the author's continual use of what might be called hermeneutic heterogeneity: the unexpected intrusion, with no particular influence on the plot itself, of a variety of mundane events into the middle-class lives of the protagonists.

These diverse glimpses into aspects of their contemporary world, while irrelevant to the story-line, are highly important because each one—in *pointilliste* fashion—adds to the cumulative effect. Each serves to flesh out and put into context the reality of this future society and to suggest, by showing instead of telling, the impact of technology and "Progress" on these individuals' lives. Others used the futuristic setting simply as an exotic background for deploying a conventional plot or for recycling familiar scenarios. In contrast, Robida's *modus operandi* was very different: rather than considering his model from above, he drew the reader into exploring it from within.

The comparison is interesting, because it emphasizes once again how vision is central to the writer, and uses the stereoscope as a pretext, without really relying on the specificities of the device (using spectacles, having to hold the device while looking at the pictures, a binocular vision, the illusion of depth, etc.). It is because Robida relied on anecdotes to give flesh to his imaginary world and preferred, according to Willems, a focused sight to a panoptic one, that the commentator chooses the stereoscope. In introduction to the english publication of Robida's *Twentieth Century*,[13] he speaks about a "glimpse" to explain how the text sometimes focuses on small anecdotes rather than giving a panoramic insight on the future: it is close to what Roland Barthes called "effect of the real", i.e. how writers add props and details that are not directly linked to the plot, but that have to do with verisimilitude.[14]

Finally, given the rich relationship between images and texts, and how the first extends the scope of the second, one could argue in favor of Willem's proposition: "three-dimension" appears thanks to a binocular collaboration between words and pictures. Willems is surely influenced by Jonathan Crary's work about the stereoscope, an unprecedented device as it reveals that the observer produces vision internally.[15] Robida, undoubtedly, circulated between text and image in an interesting way.

However, I prefer to stick with the magic lantern because it is an analogy Robida himself manipulated in his drawing: the lantern is not just a useful metaphor of image projection, as the stereoscope is a metaphor of the third dimension; it is an apparatus that allows the development of Robida's "telephonoscope." Contrary to the magic lantern that displays an enlarged image on a wall or a screen, the telephonoscope displays a moving image directly on its glass body.

A Futuristic Magic Lantern: the Telephonoscope

Windows, apertures, and screens flourish in Robida's mass-media future. He compared the wonders of the underwater world his characters are visiting to "slides of a magic lantern," as marvelous fishes and unknown sea creatures pass in front of the crystal portholes (Fig. 12).

Fig 12. Albert Robida, "Explorations sous-marines" [Explorations beneath the sea], *Le Vingtième Siècle*, Paris, G. Decaux, 1883, in-text illustration, p. 373.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

The magic lantern is indeed a possible inspiration for an emblematic invention from the future: the telephonoscope. This apparatus, composed of a crystal glass and a sound device, allows theatrical performances in the comfort of one's own home (Fig. 13), seeing and hearing the absent (Fig. 14), watching the news, and using it as a means of surveillance. Like Haïdi Guirguis,[16] I believe Robida was not interested in giving details about the telephonoscope, but rather in turning it into a "symbolical figure," always manipulated by characters who wish to see the estranged one, record their words eternally, or witness live events from half a world away.

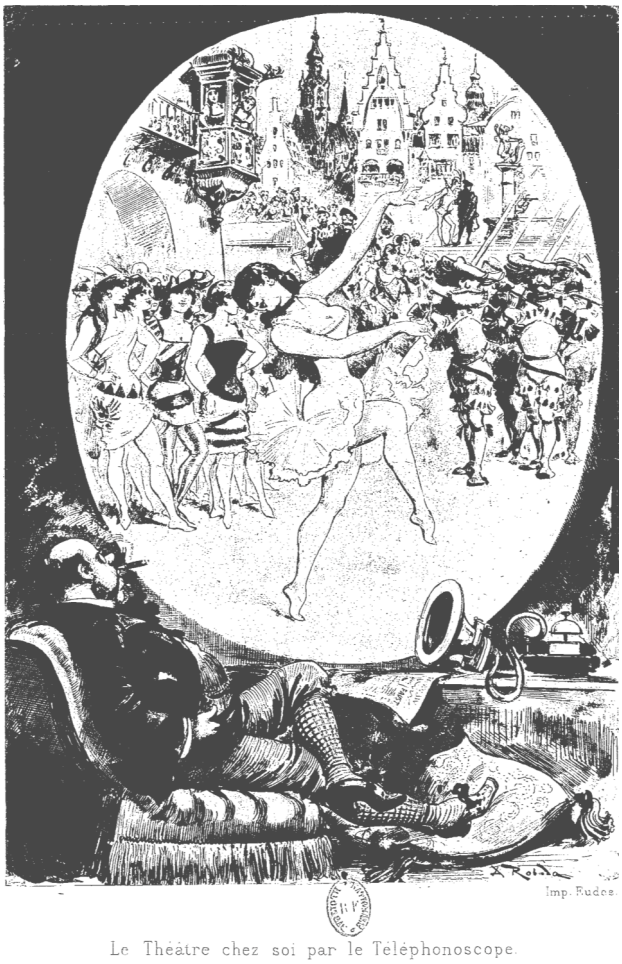


Fig 13. Albert Robida, "Le Théâtre chez soi par le téléphonoscope" [The home theatre of the telephonoscope], *Le Vingtième Siècle*, Paris, G. Decaux, 1883, plate facing p. 56.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

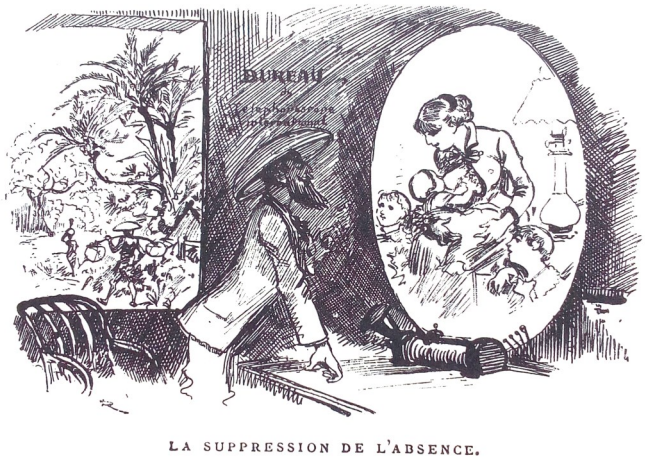


Fig 14. Albert Robida, "La suppression de l'absence," *Le Vingtième Siècle*, Paris, G. Decaux, 1883, in-text illustration, p. 71.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

This imaginary invention probably was influenced by another imaginary device, drawn in 1878 by Georges du Maurier in *Punch's Almanack* (Fig. 15): the "electric camera obscura" invented by Thomas Edison. This device allowed two spectators to see and interact with a tennis game displayed in front of them. One of Robida's illustrations looks very much like this fantasy (Fig. 16).

Anti-utopian and caricaturist, Robida would, on various occasions, draw attention to the hazards of this futurist vision, found in the private and public spheres: a war correspondent amputated live, Philox Lorris's sickness spectacularized, Hélène's troubles sleeping because of a continuous newsfeed, etc. A few years later, the telephonoscope reappeared in another prospective story illustrated by Robida and written by his friend Octave Uzanne: *La fin des livres* [*The End of Books*] (1894). It was now called a "kinetographe" and was once again inspired by the great Thomas Edison. What makes this short novel so interesting is that there will no longer be books in the future, and this imaginary device is meant to replace illustrations.[17] The analogy between the vignette and the screen display is obvious.

Robida never forgot the spectator in his illustrations, and he often divided the image into two zones, one reserved for the scene simultaneously taking place somewhere else, and the other one for the characters witnessing the scene from their homes. The disc of the telephonoscope sometimes took the place of the author's eye and seems to be a magic mirror into which he is gazing. On the back cover of the *Voyage de fiançailles* [*Engagement Voyage*] (1892), for instance, a circular cutout reveals a woman flying in an aerostat (Fig. 17). The vignette could very much be Robida's eye behind the pages of the book. It is as if the author had dug through the pages of the book to bring to life archeological remains of a future time. It could also be the surface of a magic mirror on which Robida is leaning to see a reflection or an illusion of the years to come. If Robida often used circular displays in his caricatures, it surely takes on another significance when we know about his passion for optics.

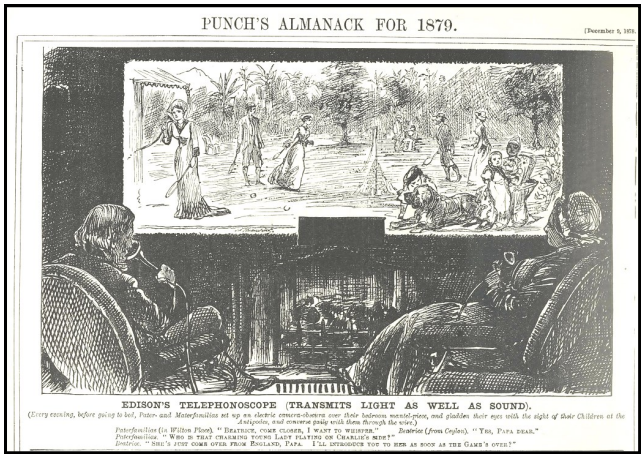


Fig 15. Georges Du Maurier, "Edison's telephonoscope (transmits light as well of sound)," *Punch's Almanack*, no. 75, December 9, 1878.

Internet Archive

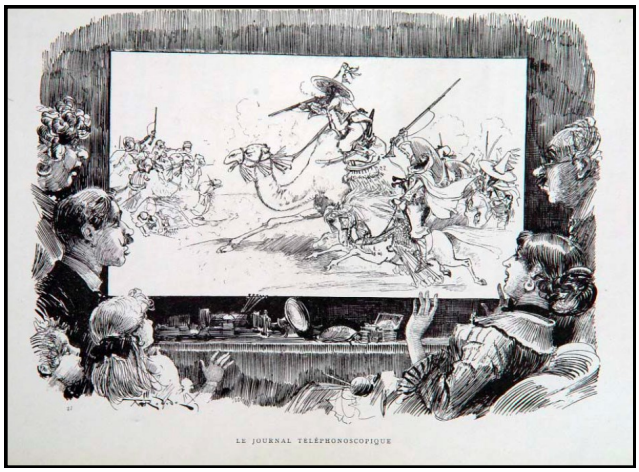


Fig 16. Albert Robida, "Le journal téléphonoscopique," *Le Vingtième Siècle*, Paris, G. Decaux, 1883, illustration facing p. 204.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

peep-hole of the cover to unveil the future, contained in the pages of the book. It is as if the author had dug through the pages of the book to bring to life archeological remains of a future time. It could also be the surface of a magic mirror on which Robida is leaning to see a reflection or an illusion of the years to come. If Robida often used circular displays in his caricatures, it surely takes on another significance when we know about his passion for optics.

Fig 17. Albert Robida, *Un Voyage de Fiançailles au XXème siècle*, Paris, Librairie Conquet, 1892, back cover.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Science-fiction seems like an interesting satirical exercise for Robida: used to mingling together illustrations and short texts in his periodical publications, he gave a more prominent role to images in his books. They speak for him.[18] The image fills in the narrator's silence when he cannot describe any further the sacking of the city of Peking, China (Fig. 18). Then again, the screen of the telephonoscope occupies nearly all the space of the illustration, and in the next pages they even look like a pair of wide open eyes (Fig. 19).

In other drawings, Robida even emptied out the eyes of his characters, mesmerized by the delectable figure undressing on the screen (Fig. 20). Doubtlessly, there is also an interesting game between the eyes of the author, overhanging the future, and the two gigantic screens on top of the newspaper *L'Epoque* headquarters, that display both real-time news feed and advertising (Fig. 21). He compared them to " two moons, particularly after dark, when an electric spark made them shine against the dark background of the sky."

Fig 18. Albert Robida, "Les Parisiens assistant par le Téléphonoscope aux horreurs du sac de Pékin," lead pencil drawing, ink wash tint and gouache.

Private collection

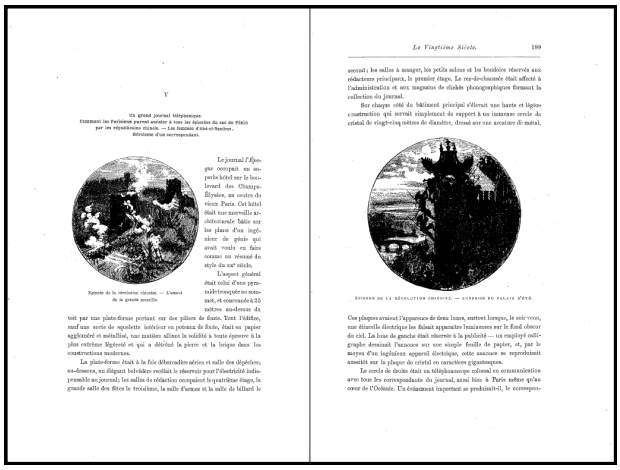


Fig 19. Albert Robida, "Episode de la Révolution chinoise," *Le Vingtième Siècle*, Paris, G. Decaux, 1883, in-text illustrations, pp. 198-199.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

— Je préfère décidément le théâtre téléphonoscopique ! s'écria Hélène.
— Nous avons aussi le théâtre rétrospectif, reprit M. Ponto.
— Rétrospectif ?
— Oui, un théâtre où ne jouent que des acteurs disparus depuis longtemps, des artistes du siècle dernier !
UNE ERREUR DU TÉLÉPHONOSCOPE.

Fig 20. Albert Robida, "Une erreur du téléphonoscope," *Le Vingtième Siècle*, Paris, G. Decaux, 1883, in-text illustration, p. 75.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

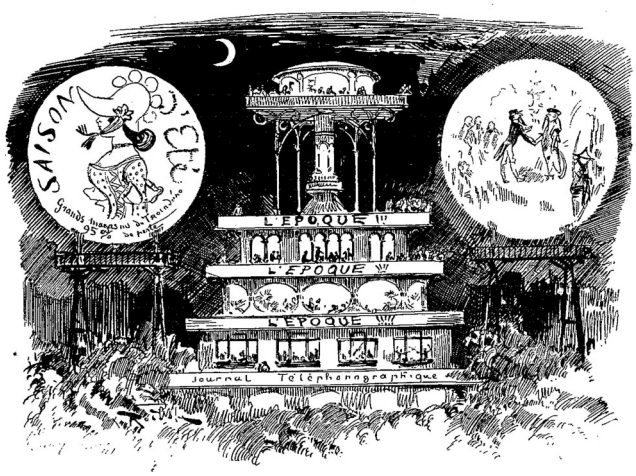


Fig 21. Albert Robida, "Les bureaux de l'Epoque," *Le Vingtième Siècle*, Paris, G. Decaux, 1883, in-text illustration, p. 203.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

There would be much to say about the literary motif of projecting advertising onto the sky or on the moon. A few authors of our proto-science-fiction imagined heavenly bodies would welcome advertising, dating ads, or promotional slogans.[20] The media-archeologist Erkki Huhtamo links such outdoor advertising to the magic lantern, more precisely to a specialized stereopticon known as the "advertigraph". He comments on the shift from projection to what he calls the urban screen: "This idea is not as fantastic as it may seem as magic lanterns had already been used for similar purposes for some time. Although billboards were also making inroads into the urban environment, it could be claimed that the dynamic media billboard had its origin in outdoor magic lantern projections."[21]

The confusion between the moon and the screen is even clearer on this frontispiece for the *Vingtième Siècle* (Fig. 22): characters are leaning against a balcony and gazing at the right side of the image. Next to them is the circular screen of the gigantic outdoor telephonoscope, recognizable by a sign ("The instant event at home") and by the brackets screwed at the base of the glass. Yet, there are aerostats flying all around the screen and in front of the surface, normally oval. Does that mean it is the moon and not the telephonoscope? The military tank would state otherwise and the flying traffic would then be a mix of real vehicles and projections on the glass, as for the land-based ones. The sky is a pioneering space in the future, and in many of Robida's illustrations there are neon billboards and signs imitating a moon crescent or stars.

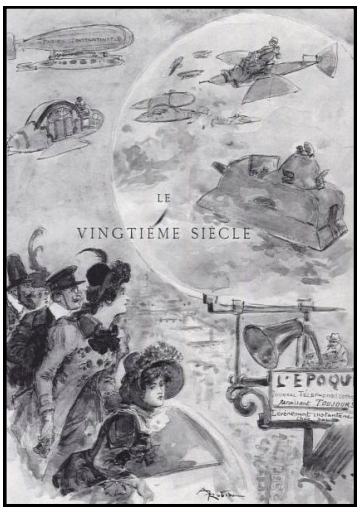


Fig 22. Albert Robida, *The Twentieth Century*, translation, introduction & critical materials by Philippe Willems, Middletown, Weysleyan University Press, 2004, pp. xxi.

However, usually placed over the fireplace, in place of a glass, one could argue that the telephonoscope has much to do with a mirror, a magic one that allows travelling someplace else and seeing the absent, a characteristic often found in folklore and fairytales.[22] The illustration then becomes a *vignette-screen*. Magic mirrors are both understood as gateways to another dimension and as an apparatus to peep into one's future. Some believed a mirror, if correctly oriented, could allow seeing the neighborhood from afar.[23] In addition, in the time of Francis I, people believed, as in the days of Pythagorus, that an engraved magic mirror's surface could be reflected on the surface of the moon for everyone to read.[24] Once again, the telephonoscope stands at a crossroad, between celestial and lantern projections, cataptromancy and a moon-screen. Robida always positioned his futuristic inventions in a chain of fabulous fertile creation; this is why it is crucial to find the origins of the telephonoscope, both folkloric (magic cauldron,[25] magic mirror, crystal ball) and contemporary technology (stereoscope, magic lantern). To understand better the telephonoscope, it is probably necessary to use the rich concept of *intermediality* that Rick Altman defines as an "historic milestone, a transitional state in the course of which a form that is in the process of becoming a full-part medium is still split between several existing media, to the extent that its own identity remains hanging."[26]

"The Invisibles": Projecting the Wonders of the Infinitely Small

Robida was interested in new ways of seeing, which have much to do with scientific popularization.[27] Many of his illustrations show cross-sectional views of means of transport or of the ground itself, aerial views of the capital city, or distant places through the telephonoscope. He also showed the invisible in different ways: the imaginary photo-phonographe, in *La Caricature*, records Nana's privacy, whereas Sulfatin, a character of the *Vingtième Siècle*, spies on his lover using the crystal glass. The microscope is another optical instrument that allows a dive into the unknown and the hidden. Microscopes became a new way of travelling into an entire new world and meeting with the infinitely small, living in a "drop-ocean."[28] The "journey into the land of the microbes," works as an interesting *mise en abyme* of Robida's stroll in the future, both being two universes to conquer.

In October 1883, the newspaper *La Caricature* reviewed a show (*The Invisibles* at the Menus-Plaisirs theatre) (Fig. 23) using a giant electric microscope, far-off cousin of the magic lantern, without the downside of burning the insects on the slide.[29] Under the spectators' baffled gaze, microscopic moving "monsters" are projected, living in a drop of water or a piece of cheese, fiercely

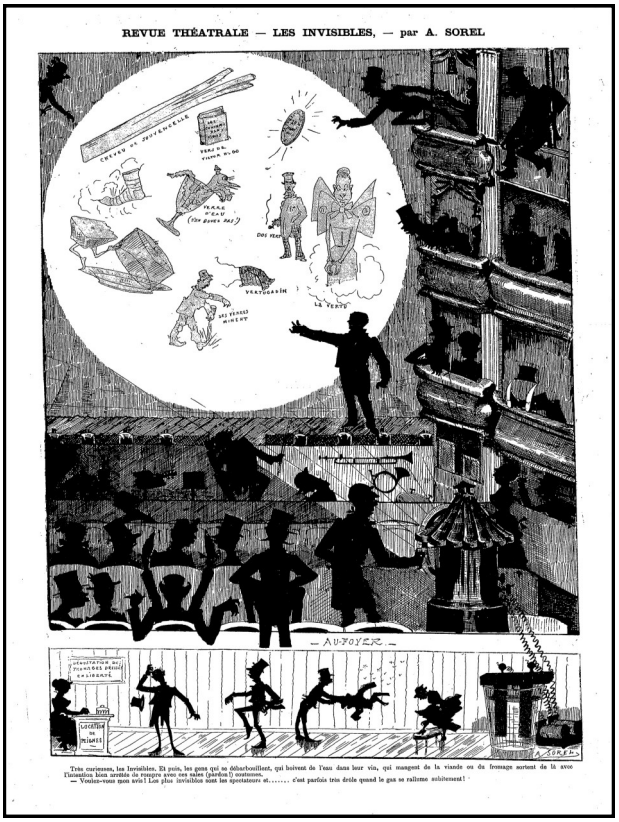


Fig 23. Illustration by A. Sorel, *La Caricature*, no. 205, December 1st 1883, p. 381.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

fighting against each other (Fig. 24). The *Invisibles* are accompanied by a monologue of M. Laguerche, full of charm and humor, as were the early magic lantern microscopic projections.[30] Jules Clarétie wrote an extensive paragraph about this "scientific theatre," this *Terra Incognita*.[31] He was especially amazed by the way objects become something else under the microscope, something both terrifying and magnificent:

> The infinitely small, the microbes, beings with monstrous shapes in their smallness, which the poster calls the *Invisibles*, are shown, magnified with an electric microscope. The Invisibles! It could very well be the title of a drama, and it is a drama, indeed, the spectacle of this fight for life shown in a drop of water. The projection of electric light onto the white fabric stretched across the scene, used as a red curtain, reveals, in a gigantic state, diatoms and molecules, the animate and the inanimate, and I don't know what enchantment of Jules Verne's imagination, of Edgar Poe's dream,

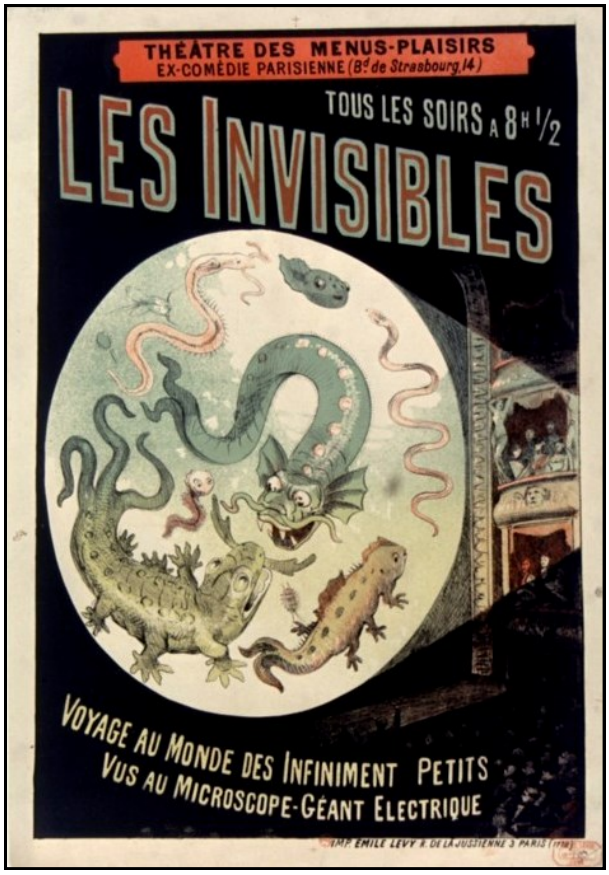

THÉATRE DES MENUS-PLAISIRS
EX-COMÉDIE PARISIENNE (Bd de Strasbourg, 14)
TOUS LES SOIRS A 8H 1/2
LES INVISIBLES
VOYAGE AU MONDE DES INFINIMENT PETITS
VUS AU MICROSCOPE-GÉANT ELECTRIQUE

Fig 24. Alfred Choubrac, *Les Invisibles*, engraving, 1883.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

> could seem more fantastic and more astonishing than this reality. Here is some real nature that is, by the way, no more disgusting than the other.[32]

The iconography of scary microbes however was not new. In 1828, William Heath, drew a terrified lady dropping her teacup after she discovers the River Thames is polluted with micro- organisms (Fig. 25). Caricaturists often mobilized this pattern for ruthless political cartoons.[33] Still, Robida's case is very interesting, because once again, microscopy has to do with the magic lantern. In the *Vingtième Siècle*, he showed a scientist, studying infectious bacteria, struggling with microbes (Fig. 26). On the side, the blackened projector of the telephonoscope looks very much like a magic lantern, an intuition confirmed by the caption "projection of its struggles with the different microbes." The only difference is that the image is a *live -stream* of what is happening on the scientist's slide, as an animated view. The iconography is even more striking now that we know that in 1883, Parisians could go and see enlarged pictures of the monstrous microscopic world.

MICROCOSM dedicated to the London Water Companies
MONSTER SOUP commonly called THAMES WATER being a correct representation of that precious stuff doled out to us

Fig 25. William Heath, *A Monster Soup commonly called Thames Water*, London, T. McLean, colored engraving, 1828.

Fig 26. Albert Robida, *La Vie Electrique*, Paris, A La Librairie Illustrée, 1892, in-text illustration, p. 180.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Robida identically replicated microbes in a drop of water in *La Vie Électrique* [*The Electric Life*] (Fig. 27). Anthropomorphism, giving eyes and a mouth to the small creaturess, is used here to amuse rather than to scare his viewers. Once again, the circular vignette is rich: it can be the shape of a drop of water, the projection of a lantern device on a wall, or the scientist's view through the microscope. Robida was aware that microscopic images are "fabricated" and

played with.[34] The projected image transforms a three dimensional object into a flat oversized one. It was all the more interesting for him that the gigantic electric microscope renders a kinetic image.

The medal of honor given to Philoxène Lorris, his bright inventor of the future, shows him reduced to the size of an animalcule, fighting the monsters bare handed, like Hercules destroying the Hydra of Lerna (Fig. 28). Once again, the microbe looks like a dangerous dragon. This illustration highlights a puzzle with microscopic projections: Is it the microbes, who have become reptilian behemoths, or the scientist—and spectator—who is being miniaturized in a tiny drop of water? Clearly Robida was inspired by this kind of monstrous public projection, as if the page of his book had become the screen on which the projection is offered to the viewer's eye.

UNE GOUTTE D'EAU VUE AU MICROSCOPE : 590,000 MICROBES ET BACILLES !

Fig 27. Albert Robida, *La Vie Electrique*, Paris, A La Librairie Illustrée, 1892, in-text illustration, p. 150.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

Martin Willis draws an interesting parallel between the magic lantern and the microscope, although he does not have any striking example to support his theory.[35] The microscope works both as a tool to broaden scientific knowledge and as an instrument of the imagination, because something is always escaping its focus: "To look through the microscope was to engage, therefore, in a visual phantasmagoria". Terry Castle, whom he quotes, speaks of a visual imaginary, because the microscopist uses his imagination to build what the eye and the lens can not show him, like a spectator in front of a phantasmagoria who does not see the source of the projection and asks himself if his mind is playing tricks on him.[36]

LA LUTTE CONTRE LE MICROBE. — MÉDAILLE D'HONNEUR DE M. PHILOX LORRIS.

Fig 28. Albert Robida, *La Vie Electrique*, Paris, A La Librairie Illustrée, 1892, in-text illustration, p. 222.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France

playing tricks on him.[36]

Conclusion

In this article, I have shown how Albert Robida was greatly influenced by the magic lantern. Passionate about optical devices, he continually reinvented the magic lantern in his books. Its projecting abilities inspired the hyperrealistic images of the telephonoscope, allowing ubiquity, kinetic images, and a new window opened on the world. The magic lantern's different innovations (the stereopticon and the giant electric microscope) are at the source of celestial advertising or enlargement of microbes, both pointing toward new territories to conquer, whether it is the sky or the invisible. The magic lantern is not only disguised and transformed into a telephonoscope in Robida's prospective novels, but it also is a metaphor for the century to come. It is a means of transportation into the future, when the beam of light turns into a time travelling machine. Related to the Phantasmagoria, the lantern has a programmatic dimension and unfolds Robida's physiological and technological ambitions. The lantern also initiates a visual interrogation closely linked to the specificities of the medium: the image (or the projection of the future in the book) cooperates closely with the text, as a commentary or a complement, turning the

illustrations into the slides of a magic lantern show. Other instruments appear in Robida's work as well. The stereoscope, the spectacles of the devil, and the panorama become useful literary metaphors for the author's glance. The magic cauldron and the magic mirror, folkloric devices and direct influences on metaphors of the magic lantern, demonstrate how prospective literature is a *vision*. However, it is once again the magic lantern and its projected images that unleashes a metatextual interrogation. The *vignette-screen* uses the blank page as a simple white surface receiving a projection, as if the viewer was the spectator at a magic lantern show. I have argued that the magic lantern, a device projecting magnified images into the spectator's space, becomes in prospective literature a magic mirror, i.e. a reflective surface that allows one to see the future and the distant, as well as going into other dimensions. Robida was not the first illustrator to be influenced by a projecting apparatus: Isidore de Grandville, before him, imagined in *Un Autre Monde* [*Another World*] (1844) many imaginary devices (a *lunograph*, an apparatus catching silhouettes, characters shaped with telescopes and binoculars), and both the magic lantern and the zootrope had great influence on the way he imagined illustrations as gateways to "another world."

Notes and References

1. *Le Vingtième Siècle* (1883*), La guerre au Vingtième Siècle* (1887), *La Vie Electrique* (1890), *Un Voyage de Fiançailles au Vingtième Siècle* (1892).

2. Honoré de Balzac, " Les journalistes, monographie de la presse parisienne," *La Grande Ville, Nouveau tableau de Paris comique, critique et philosophique*, Paris, Bureau Général des Publications Nouvelles, vol. 1, 1842, p. 164.

3. See Philippe Hamon, *Imageries, Littérature et image au XIXème siècle*, Paris, José Corti, 2001, pp. 255-267, for an in-depth analysis of the frontispiece. Hamon emphasizes the Devil's posture: he is no longer seeing Paris through a lorgnette [a pair of spectacles with a handle], but *walking* in the streets and looking at Paris from above. Moreover he is using two optical devices and embracing what Louis-Sébastien Mercier called the "plan-relief" in his *Nouveau Paris* (1800), which means he is visiting the city—or here a map—and aiming his apparatus at the same time.

4. "Benjamin compared panoramic literature to a visual medium not only to emphasize the scope of its project but also to emphasize the important role these texts accorded visual illustration. The panoramic texts pursued their ambitions to represent the present by juxtaposing descriptions of daily Parisian life and lithographs illustrating these descriptions;" quotation from Margaret Cohen, " Panoramic Literature and the invention of everyday genres," *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, Leo Charney and Vanessa Schwartz (eds.), Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1995, pp. 229.

5. Binoculars are also found in another interesting illustration from the *Vingtième Siècle*: while Ponto is closely talking over the telephonoscope, as if he were whispering into someone's ear (he is talking through his marvelous device to someone in the opera), the picture shows another spectator, at a balcony, directly gazing at the readers through binoculars. To see and to be seen is an important theme of Robida's science-fiction. A few pages before that, page 59, a generic illustration, close to an advertisement, shows a woman staring at the glass, displaying a crowd of spectators at the opera. Every rounded balcony recalls at the same time the telephonoscope present in the building and a magic lantern projection displaying for the lecturer many different characters. Binoculars, as with the telescope or the magic lantern, can pull individuals out of the narrator's space. If the telephonoscope makes Ponto's dialogue with a woman in the theatre possible, this improved lens also allows the 1950s character to interact with Robida's contemporary readers.

6. The cover recalls Ségolène Le Men's expression about the illustrated book and especially the *Physiologies* that offer a "spectacle in a chair." *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*, Paris, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1993, p. 9.

7. See Catherine Nesci and her concept of *anthroporama* that ties *flânerie* with the panopticon and panoramic literature in "L'anthroporama de Paris," *Le flâneur et les flâneuses: les femmes et la ville à l'époque romantique*, Grenoble, Ellug, 2007, pp. 79-100.

8. "The new order may have gone far towards shaping itself, but just as in that sort of lantern show that used to be known in the village as the 'Dissolving Views,' the scene that is going remains upon the mind, traceable and evident, and the newer picture is yet enigmatical long after the lines that are to replace those former ones have grown bright and strong, so that the new England of our children's children is still a riddle to me." See also Keith B. Williams, "Victorian Cinemacity and H.G Wells's Early Scientific Romances," *Comparative Critical Studies*, vol. 6, issue 3, October 2009, pp. 347-360.

9. Bruce David Sommerville, "The Time machine: a chronological and scientific revision," *Wellsian*, new series, no 17, Winter 1994, pp. 11-29, mentioned by Keith Williams in *H.G Wells, Modernity and the Movies*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2007, p. 205.

10. Sandrine Doré, *Albert Robida (1848-1926), un dessinateur fin de siècle dans la société des images*, thesis, Paris Ouest Nanterre La Defense University, 2014, p. 430.

11. Discussing the relationship between the magic lantern and both hallucination and illusion, she thinks about how literature takes over optical instruments to find a creative metaphor: "References to the experiences of the pre-cinema are hardly ever vague and indistinct: every specific machine, every spectacle is used to create a metaphor that, normally, respects its own function and structural characteristics. This metaphor lends itself to the communication of a specific meaning about the human mind, the psychological mechanisms, the relationship between perception and knowledge: for this reason, I believe it is legitimate to talk about 'metaphors of the mind.' Amongst these, we will rightly find optical machines such as the camera obscura, the magic lantern, fashionable games like the kaleidoscope, and popular shows like the phantasmagoria or the panorama." Donata Pesenti Campagnoni, "Les machines optiques comme métaphores de l'esprit," Donata Pesenti Campagnoni and Paolo Tortonese (eds), *Les arts de l'hallucination*, Paris, Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2001, p. 112.

12. Philippe Willems, "A Stereoscopic Vision of the Future: Albert Robida's Twentieth Century," *Science Fiction Studies*, #79, volume 26, part 3, November 1999.

13. "In contrast, Robida's *modus operandi* is very much in tune with that of historian Jules Michelet; rather than considering his model from above, he draws the reader into exploring it from within." Albert Robida, *The Twentieth Century*, translation, introduction & critical materials by Philippe Willems,

Middletown, Weysleyan University Press, 2004, pp xxiv.

14. Roland Barthes, "L'effet de réel," *Communications*, no. 11, 1968, pp. 84-91.

15. "In devising the stereoscope, Wheatsone aimed to simulate the actual presence of a physical object or scene, not to discover another way to exhibit a print or a drawing.... Not only will the invention of the stereoscope overcome the deficiencies of painting but also those of the diorama, which Wheatsone singles out. The diorama, he believed, was too bound up in the techniques of painting, which depended for their illusory effects on the depiction of distant subjects. The stereoscope, on the contrary, provided a form in which 'vividness' of effect increased with the apparent proximity of the object to the viewer, and the impression of three-dimensional solidity became greater as the optic axes of each diverged. Thus the desired effect of the stereoscope was not simply likeness, but immediate, apparent *tangibility*.... The stereoscope signals an eradication of 'the point of view' around which, for several centuries, meanings had been assigned and reciprocally to an observer and the object of his or her vision.... The relation of observer to image is no longer to an object quantified in relation to a position in space, but rather to two dissimilar images whose position simulates the anatomical structure of the observer's body." Jonathan Crary, "Techniques of the observer," *The Nineteenth-century Visual Culture Reader*, Vanessa Schwartz and Jeanne Przyblyski (eds.), New York, Routledge, 2004, pp. 84-85, 87.

16. Haïdi Guirguis, "Le téléphonoscope de Robida: miroir de la société du futur," online edition published by the University of Toronto (http://french.chass.utoronto.ca/SESDEF/pages/2008/articles/guirguis_2008.pdf

17. "Permit me to inquire," he said, "how you will make good the want of illustrations? Man is always an overgrown baby, and he will always ask for pictures and take pleasure in the representation of things which he imagines or has heard of from others.... Illustrations will be abundant and realistic enough to satisfy the most exacting. You perhaps forget the great discovery of tomorrow, that which is soon to amaze us al; I mean the Kinetograph of Thomas Edison, of which I was so happy as to see the first trial at Orange Park, New Jersey, during a recent visit to the great electrician. The kinetograph will be the illustrator of daily life; not only shall we see it operating in its case, but by a system of lenses and reflectors all the figures in action which it will present in photochromo may be projected upon large white screens in our own homes." Octave Uzanne, "The End of Books," *Scribner's Magazine*, vol. 16, 1894, p. 229.

18. Let's not forget that Bruno Béguet, in his book about science popularization, *La Science pour tous*, quotes a citation comparing popular science authors with a projection device, saying they "will have the ambition to manage, thanks to the artifice of the forms, to put the scientific problems and discoveries to a simplified level; they will seek to become a reflector of the light elaborated in the savant's sanctuary, to do their best to make it blossom, to serve it to all the eyes, not too bright and full of seduction." Bruno Béguet, *La Science pour tous, sur la vulgarisation scientifique en France de 1850 à 1914*, Paris, Bibliothèque du Conservatoire Nationale des Arts et Métiers, 1990.

19. Haïdi Guirguis, *La représentation de la machine dans la trilogie d'anticipation d'Albert Robida: du texte à l'image et de l'image au texte*, thesis, University of Montréal, 2012.

20. Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Félicien Champsaur, Marie-Ernest Hervilly and even Jules Verne imagined a projector, if powerful enough, could display images in the sky. Daniel Compère offers an insightful article about "celestial display": "Sur la terre comme au ciel: l'affiche", *Image [&] Narrative*, [e-journal], issue 20, December 2007.

21. Erkki Huhtamo, "The archaeology of the "False sunrise," *Filter* [e-journal], issue 70, 2008. See also Erkki Huhtamo, "Messages on the wall: an archeology of public media displays," in Scott McQuire, Meredith Martin and Sabine Niederer (eds.), *The Urban Screens Reader*, Amsterdam, Institute of Network Cultures, 2009, pp 15-29; Erkki Huhtamo, "The Sky is (not) the limit: envisioning the ultimate public media display," *Journal of Visual Culture*, vol. 8, no. 3, December 2009, pp. 329-348; Doron Galili and Yuri Tsivian, "Skybooks: skywide projection and media mythology," *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, vol. 13, 2015, pp.247-260.

22. I suggest reading an interesting debate on the origins of the telephonoscope and its relation to the television here: Gilles Delavaud, " La télévision avant la télévision" (communication et débat), in *Cahiers du Collège Iconique*, INA-Inathèque de France, 2001. François Jost explains how the telephonoscope aims to be a "window on the world," that magically extends the eye without showing the technique: there is a reason why the telephonoscope is a cristal plate, allowing simultaneously a tunnel and a direct vision.

23. In his essay about the beginning of *television* (*far-seeing*), Jean-Jacques Ledos lists a few interesting devices that extend sight and allow distance vision: a gigantic mirror on top of a hill under Alexander the Great and a very deep well with a mirror closing the opening. *Petite contribution à l'histoire de la télévision*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2012, especially pp. 10-20. See also André Lange, "Le miroir magique, la vision à distance par le biais de l'électricité à la fin du XIXème siècle et l'historiographie des origines de la télévision," *Recherches en communication*, no. 14, 2000, pp.53-72.

24. " Miroirs magiques et astrologiques," *Le magasin pittoresque*, quarantième année, 1872, pp. 62-64, and Jurgis Baltrušaitis, *Le Miroir: essai sur une légende scientifique: révélations, science-fiction et fallacies*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1978.

25. A "magic cauldron boiling with images" is an expression used to depict the telephonoscope in *Un prophète en son pays*, documentary by René Lucot, April 10. 1964, 28 minutes, 53 seconds. This film captures another specificity of the device: the hyperrealistic telephonoscope hanging on the wall is in fact a cutout, behind which is standing a real announcer.

26. Rick Altman, "De l'intermédialité au multimédia: cinéma, médias, avènement du son," *Cinémas*, autumn 1999, p. 38. For a discussion on intermediality, inter-modality, transmediality and remediation, see also Sarah Dellman, Dafna Ruppin, and Klaas de Zwan, " Intermediality in early cinema studies: an interrogation of a widely used concept for research practice," working paper, January 2012.

27. *La Vie Electrique* (1890) was for instance published in Louis Figuier's popular scientific journal, *La Science Illustrée*.

28. Wilfrid de Fonvielle, *Les merveilles du monde invisible*, 4th edition, Paris, Hachette, 1874, pp. 39-40

29. "The giant electric microscope is nothing more than the solar microscope. It consists of a mirror, inclined in such a way that the light beams are being reflected parallel to the horizon on a big lens (magnifying glass, convex on both its sides); it then causes the luminous rays to converge onto an object confined in a tube, before which is installed a system of lenses, that receive, in turn, the rays leaving the illuminated object, whose image is projected with its natural colors onto a screen placed in front of the apparatus, at a distance calculated depending on the desired magnification." *L'orchestre*, December 21, 1883, year 33, p. 126. The article adds, "thirty years ago," the Parisians could already see projections of the infinitely small in the Passage des Panoramas. Is it referring to M. Gallet's "Microscope-Monstre" (I insist on this expression), displayed in 1834 at this exact same location? See *Notice des produits de l'industrie française*, Paris, Everat, 1834, p. 225.

30. See for example the well-known commentary of the slides *The inhabitants of a drop of water under the microscope and Insect life in a pond*, Riley Bros., Magic Lantern Society slide readings library.

31. For a detailed enumeration of the slides displayed during the show: *L'orchestre*, February 1, 1884, year 34, p. 3: "Programme Les Invisibles." If the microbes are the main attraction of the show, displayed on two versions of the poster, other slides showed plants, insects, hair, or lace.

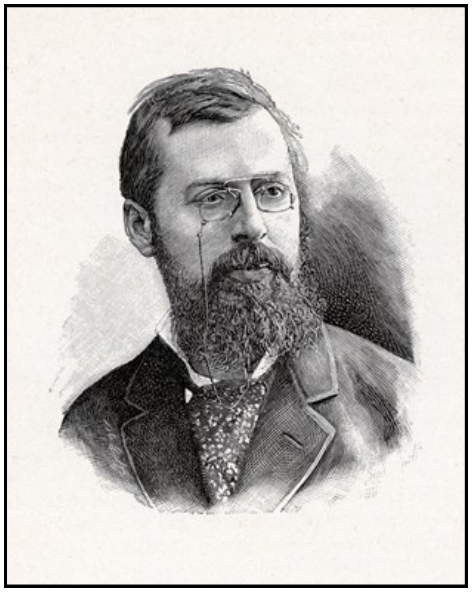
32. Jules Clarétie, *La vie à Paris, 1880-1885*, Paris, Victor-Havard, 1883, pp. 417-423.

33. Thierry Smolderen, "L'hybridation graphique, creuset de la bande-dessinée," *Hybridations, les rencontres du texte et de l'image*, iconoTextes, Presses Universitaires François Rabelais, pp. 149-152.

34. Monique Sicard, *La Fabrique du regard, images de science et appareils de vision (XV^e-XX^e siècle)*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 1998.

35. Martin Willis, *Vision, Science and Literature, 1870-1920: Ocular Horizons*; chapter on "microscopy and disease: science, imagination and the phantasmagoria," New York, Routledge, 2011. His chapter about microscopy is very enlightening because he thinks about how one looks in a microscope and the belief, often fragile, in what appears in the circular cutout: "I am not interested in the things scientists or writers (and their fictional characters) saw, but what they did and thought when they looked at them, and what they said about that looking" (p. 1).

36. Emily Godbey, "The cinema of (un)attractions: microscopic objects on screen," in John Fullerton and Jan Olsson (eds.), *Allegories of communication: Intermedial concerns from cinema to the digital*, Corso, John Libbey-CIC Publishing, 2004, p. 282: "In the most extreme cases, microscopists were accused of pure fabrication, but what Catherine Wilson and Ian Hacking have made clear is that any microscopic image is a fabrication of sorts, as a two-dimensional image of a three-dimensional object is a representation, not reality itself.... What the microscope gives, then, is like what the photograph presents; both instruments produce representations which are closely linked to the physical world, yet these representations are decidedly not reality itself."



Portrait of Albert Robida, 1848–1926, by A. Brauer. From vol. 1 of *Figures contemporaines tirées de l'Album Mariani* (Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1894).

http://libweb5.princeton.edu/visual_materials/maps/websites/thematic-maps/theme-maps/literature.html

The Research Page provides short summaries of recent scholarly research on magic lanterns and related topics in a variety of disciplines. For a comprehensive research bibliography on magic lanterns, see:

https://www.zotero.org/groups/magic_lantern_research_group

***The Magic Lantern*, no. 3 (June 2015).**

This issue of the journal published by our sister society in the UK contains several interesting and richly illustrated articles on a variety of topics. Lindsay Cox discusses the use of limelight projection by the Salvation Army in Australia ("Salvation and the silver screen," pp. 1, 3-5). The Army's efforts began with a limelight lantern show in 1891 advertising the forthcoming visit of General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army. The success of that effort led to the creation of the Limelight Brigade, which produced a traveling lantern show that toured towns along the East Coast of Australia. By 1895, the Brigade had given over 500 shows across Australia and New Zealand. In the late 1890s, moving pictures were added to their shows, and between 1901 and 1905, nearly 80% of Australian films were produced by the Salvation Army.

Much of this article focuses on a spectacular production called *Soldiers of the Cross*, which combined 17 black and while motion picture scenes of no more than 90 seconds each with 220 hand-colored lantern slides. The lantern slide and motion picture productions lasted until 1910, when a new leader of the Australian Salvation Army shut down the whole operation. This article is illustrated with color live-model slides and pictures of the Army's lanterns in use.

A second fascinating article by Annet Duller, "How Kasperl became Mr. Punch" (pp. 6-9) discusses the evolution of images of Mr. Punch, namesake of the British cartoon magazine *Punch*, and a jester figure called Kasperl, the center German stories written and illustrated by Franz Graf von Pocci, usually with shadow or silhouette images. Many of these stories were written for puppet theater productions. Images of Kasperl were reproduced in children's books and as magic lantern slides, and also were used by wandering street story tellers. Albert Smith integrated lantern slides of Kasperl into his program at the Egyptian Hall on *The Ascent of Mont Blanc* beginning in the late 1850s, providing amusing entertainment for children who might be less enthralled by the main program. In the process, he added to images of Kasperl features typical of Mr. Punch, including a hunched back and hooked nose. The article has many wonderful illustrations, including lantern slides.

***The Magic Lantern*, No. 4 (September 2015).**

This issue of *The Magic Lantern* contains mostly articles about collections and collectables rather than academic research. In his article on "Pose slides: the Sellers-Ray Collection" (pp.1, 3-6), Mervyn Heard describes a large collection of pose slides, which provide backgrounds that allow a live actor to interact with the projected slide—for example, the actor's head can appear in a blank space on a projected image of a costume, a butterfly, etc. The collection came from the estate of the actor Peter Sellers, whose mother used the slides in her own performances in the 1930s, and was handed down to two cousins named Ray. Heard acquired the collection in 2014 and provides a brief introduction to the history and use of these slides, with many color examples. A more detailed discussion, with some additional spectacular slides, can be found in: Mervyn Heard. 2014. Dressed in light: the ancient art of projecting on people. *Theatre Design and Technology* 50 (4):38-50 [http://tdt.usitt.org/GetPDF.aspx?PDF=50-4PoseSlides].

Other notable shorter contributions include a few paragraphs by Jeremy Brooker with photos describing a wonderful Fantascope lantern recently acquired by the Cinémathéque Française in Paris; an account of two recently purchased early bull's-eye lanterns by Helmut Waelde, and a two-page spread of advertisements for professional and toy magic lanterns from a 1900 issue of a German satirical magazine.

***The Magic Lantern*, No. 5 (December 2015).**

The first major research article in this issue of *The Magic Lantern* is Nicholas Hiley's "William Stewart and the Magic Lantern Mission, " pp. 1, 3-5. The author purchased a fine biunial lantern at an auction. Attached to the lantern was a note indicating that the lantern originally belonged to William Stewart, founder of the Magic Lantern Mission. It also indicated that the family still had albums with numerous newspaper clippings, tickets, handbills, and other ephemera related to his shows. Using this trove of information, the author was able to produce a remarkably detailed chronicle of Stewart's career as a lanternist from the late 1870s until around 1910 (Stewart died in 1914). One theme of the article is the constant financial difficulty Stewart experienced in trying to maintain the Mission, which could not be sustained by admission charges alone, which usually were quite low.

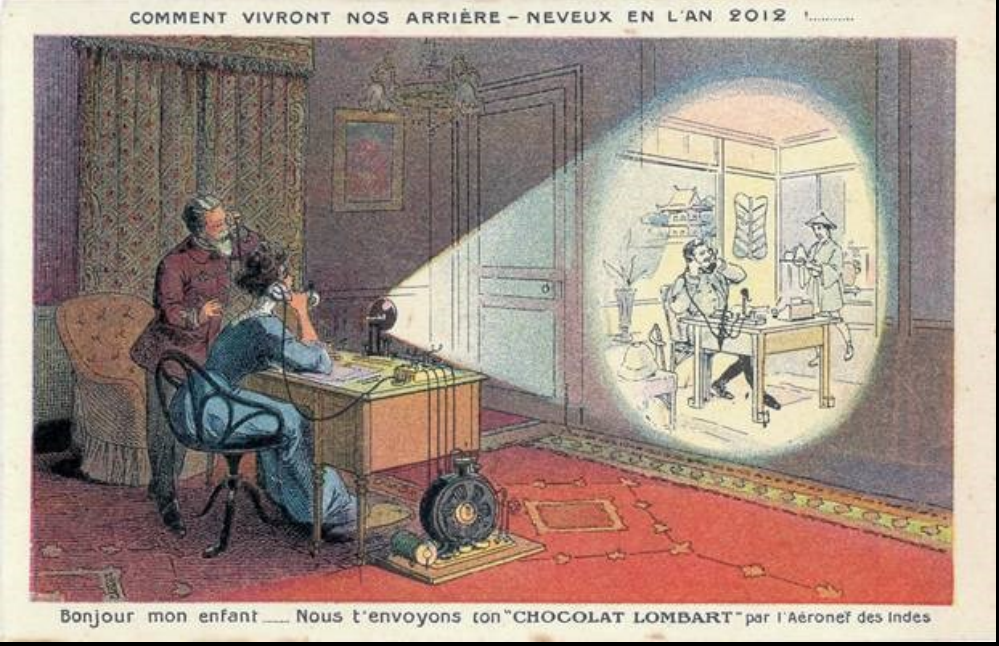
Another interesting article is by Sjaak Boone, "The magic lantern of Antoni Solaro, chimney sweep," (pp.6-9). The article describes the various businesses of Solaro, originally from Switzerland, who set up shop in the Netherlands in the 1750s. During the warm months of the year, when fireplaces were not in use, Solaro worked as a chimney sweep and held the contract to clean all the chimneys in public buildings in the city of Leeuwarden. During cold months, he manufactured and sold instruments such as barometers and thermometers, as well as peepshow boxes, optical mirrors, camera obscuras, magnifying glasses, and magic lanterns. The work on meterological and optical instruments continued through Antoni's three sons, one of which also took over the chimney sweeping business. Another son served as a Catholic priest, while another was a wood carver and sculptor.

***The Magic Lantern*, No. 6 (March 2016).**

This issue of *The Magic Lantern* is loaded with interesting articles. First is a well researched and richly illustrated article by Wendy Bird on "Don Juan Meig and Robertson: the Spanish Royal Physics cabinet rediscovered," (pp. 1, 3-5). Using the writings of Meig, a member of the Spanish court, and other archival sources, she explores the phantasmagoria of Robertson and others in late 18th and early 19th century Spain. She places these show in the context of the conflict of Enlightenment views of rational science and a growing belief in the irrational, including ghosts, spectres, and the occult. The second part of the article, which contains the most material on magic lanterns, is in issue no. 7 (pp. 1, 3-5). In her research in Spanish archives, Bird discovered the written inventory of the Spanish Royal Physics Cabinet, which held many optical intruments, including magic lanterns.

Also in issue 6 is Mervyn Heard's article on "The Great Snazelle," pp.6-9, which he delivered as a talk at our last convention in Brookline, Massachusetts. Snazelle was a colorful entertainer and showman with a loose relationship to the truth. Given his odd name and the fact that the article lacks sources, and the dramatic and humorous way in which the talk was delivered, one might think the whole story was made up. Snazelle, however, was a real person whose magic lantern shows in Australia and New Zealand are discussed in an Australian Master's Thesis: Laurence James Moore (2009), "Never on a Sunday: a Study of Sunday Observance and Sunday Public Musical Entertainment in Theatres in Melbourne, 1890-1895," Master' Thesis, Australian Catholic University (http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/digitaltheses/public/adt-acuvp259.17022011/02chapters.pdf).

Another interesting research article in this issue is Phillip Roberts, "The early life of Philip Carpenter," pp. 10-13, which reveals new details of the early life of the most important early 19th century English magic lantern and slide manufacturer and the origins of his business. The article also discusses some previously poorly known siblings.


COMMENT VIVRONT NOS ARRIÈRE – NEVEUX EN L'AN 2012 !.....
Bonjour mon enfant ..... Nous t'envoyons ton "CHOCOLAT LOMBART" par l'Aéronef des Indes

Above: American trade card [printed in Germany] (c. 1900) and French trade card (c. 1912) depicting the telephonoscope, a sort of long-distance transmitting magic lantern of the future that could project moving pictures with sound and enable two-way communication. This was a favorite futuristic device depicted by Albert Robida.

http://publicdomainreview.org/collections/the-telephonoscope-1879/

Front Cover: Back and front covers of Robida's *The Nineteenth Century*.

Author's collection.